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Conviction In Dahmer Death Upheld

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — The Mississippi Supreme Court today upheld the murder conviction and life sentence given William Thomas Smith in the 1966 firebomb slaying of Negro leader Vernon Dahmer.

The court, in an opinion by Justice Robert Lee Jones, overruled Smith's contention that testimony dealing with Ku Klux Klan membership had unfairly prejudiced the jury.

The court also rejected arguments that the procedures for listing prospective jurors was faulty, and that the district attorney had used prejudicial and unsupported statements in his closing arguments.

Jones said Smith's own lawyer first brought up the association with the Klan.

Prospective jurors were asked by the defense if the fact that Smith was a member of the Klan would influence their decision.